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REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the application. Claims 1, 5, 6, 11, 13, and 15-17 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed (see, e.g., FIGS. 1A and 1B, and page 9, lines 11-21 of the specification).

Claims 5, 6, 13, and 15-17 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph as being indefinite because of the language "nearly-rectangular." Claims 5, 6, 13, and 15-17 have been amended to replace "nearly-rectangular" with "rectangular" or "frame" throughout the claims. It is believed that the amendments obviate the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-3, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication 62-059093 (referred to as "Mamoru" in the Office Action). Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication 2001-171066 (referred to as "Noboru" in the Office Action). The remaining claims were rejected on combinations involving the above references. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of claim 1 over the "Mamoru" reference, in the Office Action, FIG. 2 of Mamoru was cited allegedly for disclosing a printing plate having a raised part and a groove.

In Mamoru, the recessed parts function as ink reservoirs to enable thick film printing (see Abstract). However, as shown in FIGS. 1(d) and 2 of Mamoru, there is no teaching or suggestion of a raised part that extends linearly around a rectangular frame, or at least one groove that passes from one side to another side of a raised part.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the Mamoru reference does not anticipate or otherwise render obvious the Applicants' claimed invention as recited in claim 1.

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Regarding the rejection of claim 11 over the Noboru reference, as cited in the Office Action, a relief printing plate 1 has projecting parts 10 and recessed parts 11 (see, e.g., FIGS. 1(a) to 1(c) and the Abstract).

In Noboru, even if the projecting parts 10 are somehow considered as corresponding to Applicants' claimed "raised part," there is no teaching or suggestion of a plurality of grooves that pass through from one side to another side of the raised part. For example, in the pattern disclosed in FIG. 2(g) of Noboru, each projecting part 10 has only one recessed part.

For at least the reasons discussed above, the Noboru reference does not anticipate or otherwise render obvious the Applicants' claimed invention as recited in claim 11.

It is believed the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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